



Niagara Escarpment **ViEWS**

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**OUR 50TH
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Partner with EBC to fight climate change!

By Bob Barnett

For years we have heard politicians say what they plan to do or will oppose. People want more trees, not another 30-second clip announcing more plans. And they want to know *what can I do NOW?*

At Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC), we feel tree planting is good but second-best to conserving the woodlands and wetlands we have working for us now. On the 8,777 acres we own, we have 2,500 acres of mature forest and another 3,400 acres of rapidly maturing forest. These are the best trees for soaking up carbon. They have huge canopies, millions of leaves and their roots and fungi extend for miles. Their leaves and roots build soil carbon. We have 5,000 more acres of younger trees which are slowly maturing, plus grasslands and wetlands where we have less information about their carbon potential. Altogether, we estimate EBC lands sequester 41,000 tonnes of carbon a year. That's over 120,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Sadly, some conservation authorities and the provincial government in Algonquin Park sell trees to fund staff or keep mills active. The only trees we cut are one at a time for safety on our trails.

EBC's trees add 5.5 tonnes of carbon per acre annually. We have a sound arrangement with Carbonzero, Desjardins Financial and others, to sell our "enhanced forestry" carbon offsets of about 1.5 tonnes per acre. EBC hires valuers and verifiers for each sale of enhanced forestry offsets and follows strict protocols including allowances for fires, wind, disease and theft. Each sale is recorded by the Canadian Standards Association. These

offsets are above and beyond "standard" forestry where a woodlot owner typically harvests mature trees every seven to 15 years. EBC doesn't harvest trees. *We protect that carbon sequestration of 41,000 tonnes a year and add to it with each new reserve.*

Protect Trees

Right now, we protect four tonnes of carbon an acre which is not evaluated, verified and sold as "enhanced" forestry. Unlike most other owners we protect those trees permanently. We propose to assign those four tonnes of "base" carbon offsets to our supporters so EBC can acquire more forest to sequester more carbon. Those conserved trees will continue to put carbon into the soil, unlike trees removed from commercial woodlots. Real conservation involves letting our trees improve air and water while providing habitat and places to hike.

Here's how you can help with global warming:

1. Calculate your annual carbon usage on Carbonzero's or EBC's calculator.
2. Donate enough to help EBC buy sufficient acres to cover your usage. EBC will record you as the patron of those acres. What about an acre for \$100 for 20 years? That sequesters four tonnes a year.
3. EBC will use the funds to acquire more acres. A donated acre only costs us about \$100, and 85 per cent of our new reserves are donated.

The following approach can make it easier for you:

1. Acquire green securities which have good historical

returns, but don't profit from oil or armaments. Let's say you invest \$10,000.

2. At year-end you assess your gain over the year. Let's say you made \$600, typical for green funds.
3. You can donate some units worth \$200 to EBC, get a tax receipt, and reduce your taxes.

The result: For each \$100 donated, EBC will assign you an acre and four tonnes of offsets. You can feel secure that you have done your fair share to fight climate change. With the \$200 above, EBC will acquire two new acres of forest. That will sequester eight more tonnes of carbon. The circle will continue.

The benefits go far beyond carbon sequestration. Those two acres will aid flood prevention and provide cleaner air and water, more habitat for species of conservation concern and

more places for you to visit, spend time in the woods and experience the health benefits of the outdoors.

Leave a legacy now for your grandchildren. We call this our Climate Bond Program. It is not a financial bond. It is a bond between you and Earth where your investments help this planet. Call Bob at 416-960-8121. We have several people doing this now.

Please note: sequestering carbon and calculating carbon offsets is a complex business. For the Climate Bond program described here there is no widely-accepted protocol; EBC will use the measurements from the enhanced forestry program and maintain our own registry to provide you with a carbon "offset" we can all be comfortable with.

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Mature trees are the best for soaking up carbon.
PHOTO BY BOB BARNETT.